

Domestic Violence Coordinating Council  
Quarterly Meeting Minutes  
May 9, 2016  
Buena Vista, New Castle

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**Call to Order:** Senator Blevins, Chair, called the DVCC Quarterly meeting to order at 1:41 p.m.

**Introductions:** In attendance were the following DVCC members: Senator Patricia Blevins, Dana Harrington Conner, Secretary Carla Benson-Green (DSCYF), Representative Stephanie Bolden, Senator Catherine Cloutier, Commissioner Robert Coupe, Representative Deborah Hudson, Secretary James Mosley, Chief Judge Micheal Newell, Chief Defender Brendan O'Neill, and Vincent Poppiti. Also in attendance were Marcey Rezac (People's Place), Peggy Bell (DELJIS), Rosalia Velazquez (La Esperanza), Erin Connelly (DOC), Ellen Cooper (Family Court), Judge Jennifer Ranji (Family Court), Jeffrey Hill (Capitol Police), Shamla McLaurin (Catholic Charities), Kathy Jennings (DOJ) for Attorney General Matt Denn, Judge Andrea Rocanelli (Superior Court) for President Judge Jan Jurden, Tia Tucker (CHILD, Inc.) and Tim Collins (member of the public), and DVCC Staff: Ellie Torres, Natasha Smith, Aimee String, Pat Kwetkauskie and Karen Ewing.

**Minutes:** A motion to approve the March 14, 2016 minutes was made, seconded and the minutes were approved.

**Vote of At-Large Members:** Two nominations were received for the vacant at-large positions. They are Gretchen Gilchrist an attorney practicing in Family Court and involved with DVLS, and Laura Graham, an attorney at CLASI who could chair the Immigration Committee. A motion was made to approve the at-large nominations, seconded and approved.

**Presentation – Fatal Incident Review Team Annual Report:** Dana Harrington Conner highlighted a few key elements from the 2016 draft FIRT report. Suggested changes will be incorporated into the report as well as agency responses to the recommendation.

**Family Court Enhancement Project (FCEP) Update:** The FCEP is in the second year of a federal grant with the hopes of an extension in September 2016. Chief Judge Newell updated the Council on the recent Management Team meeting and visit by the technical assistance providers. Judge Ranji presented an update on the Access to Justice and the Differentiation Subcommittees. The Access to Justice Subcommittee focus is on the process prior to the litigants getting before a judge. The committee is reviewing signage, forms, scheduling, and informational packets for both Protection from Abuse and custody proceedings. The Differentiation Subcommittee's focus is on what happens in a custody case with domestic violence once it is scheduled with a judge. Members of both committees will be attending site visits in Winnebago, Illinois and Brooklyn. Chief Judge Newell mentioned that all Judges and Commissioners have completed the first level of the domestic violence training provided by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Several have attended the second level training with more to be scheduled. There was a discussion regarding judges in other courts knowing whether an active PFA was the result of a finding or consent. Judge Rocanelli would like to meet with Peggy Bell to discuss training for

Judges on DELJIS so that all Judges know what screen to find the active PFA. Judge Rocanelli suggested meeting with Chief Judge Newell to discuss providing more domestic violence history and information to Superior Court.

**Training Update:** STOP grant money was utilized for domestic violence training for the judiciary during the months of April and May 2016. In June, the AOC will be training judicial branch staff on domestic violence. It was discussed that if funds remain, bench cards and additional resources might be helpful.

### **DVCC Committee Updates:**

**Legislative Committee:** Senator Blevins stated three of the DVCC bills have passed the Senate and are assigned to the House Judiciary Committee: SB 55 to extend ex parte orders up to 15 days to allow additional time for service; SB 209 amends the first offenders' statute to require that court-ordered DV treatment be completed with a DVCC certified provider; and SB 220 amends the DVCC statute regarding voting for chair and vice chair, and amends the FIRT statute regarding membership, the definition of near death, and requires notification to the DVCC of DV-related homicides and near deaths. Finally, HB 373 will be in House Judiciary this week to transfer misdemeanor criminal jurisdiction of domestic violence offenses between former spouses, couples cohabitating, and couples with a child in common but not cohabitating from CCP to Family Court.

**Treatment Committee:** The evaluation of certified treatment programs has begun with a pre-test which was circulated to the Courts and was completed by 100% of the judicial officers in the Court of Common Pleas, the Superior Court, and Family Court. A report of the survey results was distributed to the Council members. A discussion ensued regarding batterers' intervention versus anger management counseling. Kathy Jennings mentioned training prosecutors on the difference between the programs. Additionally, through the evaluation of certified treatment programs grant, a full day training for treatment providers has been scheduled for June 21<sup>st</sup> which will focus on female offenders.

**Public Awareness:** The Committee is supporting the 2016 Domestic Violence Prevention Forums that are to be scheduled in three high schools. ArtFusion has confirmed their willingness to participate once again. The Committee will be sponsoring a healthy relationships poster contest at the three selected DV Prevention Forum high schools. Winners will be given prizes at the December 2016 Quarterly meeting.

**Elderly & DV Committee:** The Committee has concluded five statewide listening sessions. The goal of the sessions was to learn about the needs of elderly victims of domestic violence victims. In attendance were seniors, family members and caregivers of seniors, and professional community members. The next steps are to identify areas of prevalence and services needed.

### **Announcements:**

- Supervised Visitation Month– flyers were distributed announcing supervised visitation month and that the Family Visitation centers are looking for toy donations.
- Law Enforcement Conference – November 7<sup>th</sup> at PolyTech

- Human Trafficking Conference – November 17<sup>th</sup> at Dover Downs
- Protecting Delaware's Children Conference – April 25-26 at Chase Center

**Public Comment:** Tim Collins, member of the public, made statements to the Council regarding his concerns.

**Next Meeting Date:** September 12, 2016 at 1:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.